

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) An apparatus for use in a chemical mechanical planarization (CMP) system, comprising:

a platen capable of introducing fluid beneath a polishing pad; and

a platen support cover configured to surround the platen, the platen being disposed at a first level and the platen support cover being disposed at a second level, the first level being lower relative to the second level, the platen and the platen support cover configured to be disposed below the polishing pad such that the polishing pad is closer to the second level than the first level the platen support cover having a width at the second level, the width being substantially equal around the platen;

wherein at least one fluid output control path is defined through the platen support cover at a wall location defined between the first level and the second level.

2. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the width being substantially equal is one of a circular shape platen support cover that enables substantially uniform distribution of fluid pressure escaping between the platen support cover and the polishing pad.

3. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein a recessed region is defined between the platen, the platen support cover, and beneath the polishing pad.

4. (original) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the platen introduces fluid into the recessed region.

5. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein a substrate is capable of being applied over the polishing pad and over the platen.

6. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 4, ~~wherein at least one fluid output control path is defined through the platen support cover at a wall location defined between the first level and the second level,~~ the at least one fluid output control path enabling controlled release of fluid contained over the platen, surrounded by the platen support cover, and beneath the polishing pad.

7. (original) The apparatus of claim 4, wherein at least one fluid output control path is defined through the platen support cover at a location on the surface of the second level, the at least one fluid output control path enabling controlled release of fluid contained over the platen, surrounded by the platen support cover, and beneath the polishing pad.

8.-10. (Cancelled)

11. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first level and the second level is relative to a vertical distance from the polishing pad.

12. (original) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the at least one fluid output control path is replicated a number of times around a periphery of the platen support cover.

13. (original) An apparatus for use in a chemical mechanical planarization (CMP) system, comprising:

a platen;

a platen support cover configured to surround the platen, the platen being disposed at a first level and the platen support cover being disposed at a second level, the first level being lower relative to the second level, the platen and the platen support cover configured to be disposed below a polishing pad such that the polishing pad is closer to the second level than the first level; and

at least one fluid output control path defined through the platen support cover, the at least one fluid output control path enabling controlled release of fluid contained over the platen, surrounded by the platen support cover, and beneath the polishing pad.

14. (original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the at least one fluid output control path is defined through the platen support cover at a wall location defined between the first level and the second level.

15. (original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the at least one fluid output control path is defined on the surface of the platen support cover on the second level.

16. (original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein a recessed region is defined between the platen, the platen support cover, and beneath the polishing pad.

17. (original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the platen introduces fluid into the recessed region.

18. (original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein a substrate is capable of being applied over the polishing pad and over the platen.

19.-21. (Cancelled)

22. (original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the platen support cover is one of a circular, half circular, rectangular, octagonal, hexagonal, and oval shape that provides uniform distribution of fluid pressure escaping beneath the polishing pad.

23.-24. (Cancelled)

25. (original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the first level and the second level is relative to a vertical distance from the polishing pad.

26. (original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the at least one fluid output control path is replicated a number of times around a periphery of the platen support cover.

27. (original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the platen support cover extends to an area beyond the area directly beneath a retaining ring of a carrier head configured to be positioned above the platen and the polishing pad.

28. (original) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the platen support cover has area directly beneath a retaining ring of a carrier head configured to be positioned above the platen and the polishing pad.

29. (original) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein a retaining ring restricts pressure in the recessed region above the platen and below the polishing pad.

30. -36. (Cancelled)